

VZCZCXRO0300  
RR RUEH DU RUEHMR RUEHRN  
DE RUEHSA #4248/01 3611441  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
R 271441Z DEC 07  
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3033  
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE  
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1248  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1386  
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 1271  
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 0189  
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 0289  
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD 0083  
RUEHBW/AMEMBASSY BELGRADE 0024  
RUEHHE/AMEMBASSY HELSINKI 0101  
RUEHBL/AMCONSUL BELFAST 0012  
RUEHLA/AMCONSUL BARCELONA 0007  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RUEHPS/USOFFICE PRISTINA 0021  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 0077  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PRETORIA 004248

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/26/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [PINR](#) [IZ](#) [YI](#) [CO](#) [SP](#) [SF](#)

SUBJECT: MEYER ON IRAQ, KOSOVO, COLOMBIA, AND BASQUE PEACE INITIATIVES

REF: A. PRETORIA 3277

[1](#)B. HELSINKI 0675

[1](#)C. BELFAST 0215

PRETORIA 00004248 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Ambassador Eric M. Bost. Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Former South African Government (SAG) minister and conflict resolution expert Roelf Meyer updated A/PolCounselor and PolOff December 20 on his various international peace initiatives and gave his views on the recent ANC election (septel). Meyer will participate in the second meeting of Iraqi political parties scheduled to take place in February 2008, likely in Helsinki at the CMI offices. He continues to advise Kosovo authorities on a draft constitution, and believes Kosovo will declare independence in 2008 following the Serb elections. In Colombia, Meyer advised President Uribe in early December to forego foreign mediation of the hostage crisis and instead focus on developing a broader peace strategy. Finally, in the Basque country, Meyer is involved in a Network of European Foundations peace initiative and believes the recent arrests of Basque activists have attracted Basque youth to the separatist cause. Meyer is open to USG input on these peace initiatives. END SUMMARY.

-----  
Follow-up Iraq Peace Meeting Planned for February  
-----

[1](#)2. (C) Padraig O'Malley, organizer of the August 31 - September 3, 2007 meeting of Iraqi political parties in Helsinki (reftels), told Meyer he is organizing another Iraq peace meeting in February 2008, likely at the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) offices in Finland. Recently returned from Baghdad, O'Malley reports that there is agreement on the usefulness of continuing with the initiative, and interest in including a "broader" group of participants. Meyer was unsure whether this means inclusion

of additional parties, like the Kurds or militias, or of higher-level officials from the same parties. Meyer plans to participate in the February meeting.

-----  
Assisting Kosovo Constitution-Drafting  
-----

13. (C) On a trip funded by the Rockefeller Brothers Foundation, Meyer traveled to Kosovo in October to meet with local officials and provide advice on drafting a new constitution. He understands that a draft constitution is complete and includes strong protections for minority rights, but he has not seen the current draft. Meyer also met with the Kosovo's President and Deputy Prime Minister, both of whom he found "moderate" and "reasonable." Meyer understands that Kosovo will likely wait until after the Serb elections to declare independence. The Kosovo leadership told him they believe the United States and most of Europe will support their declaration, including Germany, although Spain and Greece may support Serbia. Neither the Kosovars nor the Serbs are inclined toward violence, Meyer believes, although he admitted that he does not have a good feel for the Qhe admitted that he does not have a good feel for the sentiments of the border communities. Meyer briefed the South African Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) on his trip, but did not have any update on the SAG position on Kosovo.

-----  
Providing Advice to Colombian President Uribe  
-----

14. (C) Meyer was also invited to advise informally Colombian President Alvaro Uribe, whom he met twice on December 4 and 5 in Bogota, on the ongoing hostage crisis. Meyer urged Uribe

PRETORIA 00004248 002.2 OF 002

to develop a broader peace strategy, instead of focusing on the hostages. (NOTE: Meyer had earlier given a lecture in Cali at an event sponsored by a local non-governmental organization, in which he recommended against foreign mediation of the ongoing hostage crisis. Meyer suspected that Uribe heard of his remarks, and thus invited him back to Bogota. END NOTE.) Meyer found Uribe intelligent and engaging, and open to his advice.

-----  
Involved in NEC Initiative in Basque Region  
-----

15. (C) In the Basque region of Spain, Meyer is part of a Network of European Foundations (NEF) initiative, funded by the Joseph Roundtree Charitable Trust, to promote peace and reconciliation. The other three experts involved with the NEF initiative are South African human rights lawyer Brian Currin, former INTERPOL head Raymond Kendall, and former Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland Nuala O'Lean. Meyer said he was originally skeptical about Basque grievances but has come to believe the Basque people have a legitimate right to express their views democratically on independence, although he personally opposes succession. In Meyer's view, the recent Spanish government arrests of Basque political activists have created unnecessary resentment in the Basque region and led to the increasing radicalization of Basque youth.

16. (C) The four experts involved in the NEF initiative have not been able to secure meetings in Madrid, Meyer said. The Spanish government is reluctant to meet with them, Meyer believes, since it might appear that they are "mediating" the Basque political situation. Meyer speculated that Madrid might be more open to the NEF initiative following national elections in 2008.

-----

Comment

-----

¶7. (C) A long-time Embassy contact and well-respected South African politician, Meyer played a key role in South Africa's transition to democracy. In his role as advisor on conflict resolution, Meyer has been involved in numerous peace initiatives, including in Northern Ireland, Burundi, and Bolivia, as well as his ongoing involvement in Sri Lanka. Meyer is open to further discussions with U.S. officials on his activities, and seemed particularly interested in U.S. views on the ongoing Colombian hostage crisis. Post is prepared to pass on suggestions or background papers to Meyer if deemed useful.  
BOST